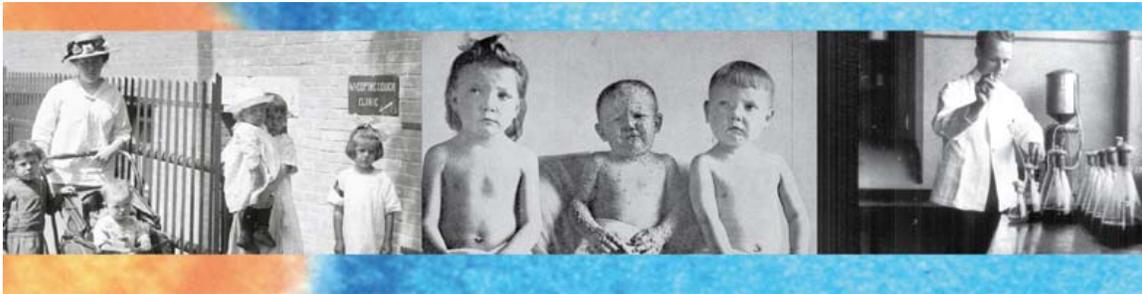


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New online resource aims to shed light on the history of vaccinations in Canada



(KINGSTON, Ont.) –The Museum of Health Care launches new online exhibit titled *Vaccines and Immunization: Epidemics, Prevention, and Canadian Innovation*.

Developed by Guest Curator and medical historian Christopher J. Ruty, Ph.D, the exhibit explores the importance of vaccinations to the ongoing maintenance of community health. Using case studies of diseases that saw significant decreases in the 20th century because of immunization-small pox, diphtheria, polio, whooping cough, among others-the online exhibit traces the history of past epidemics and their cost to society, explores the search for preventative measures such as vaccines, and discusses Canada's role in vaccine development. This online exhibit is based on a physical exhibit launched in November 2013, currently on display at the Museum of Health Care in Kingston.

With a history spanning more than two centuries, immunization is not a new concept, but even after all this time it is still a subject of debate. According to Museum of Health Care Curator Maxime Chouinard "The exhibit tells this story from a Canadian perspective, so that it can be used as a reference for people wanting to learn about immunization. Some may have recollections of these epidemics, but many have no idea of the fear and suffering that diseases such as polio or diphtheria once caused. Through survivors' testimonies, as well as historical videos and documents, we created an online resource which can be used by Canadians wishing to discover more about this subject which still makes the headlines."

Guest Curator Christopher Ruty added "Vaccines and immunization are clear success stories, yet they are often taken for granted, or misunderstood, or unfairly feared out of ignorance, at the risk of personal and public health. However, their importance becomes unmistakable when the history of infectious diseases and the development of vaccines designed to prevent them are explored together. The Canadian experience on both fronts is particularly significant and is the primary focus of this online exhibit."

The exhibit is available online on the Museum of Health Care's website
<http://www.museumofhealthcare.ca/explore/exhibits/vaccinations/index.html>

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